

CLAIMS

Claims 1-3 (canceled).

Claim 4. (New) An expandable umbrella for accommodating multiple users comprising:
a pair of elongated telescoping shafts, each having an upper end and a lower end, with a handle at the lower end of each shaft for grasping by user;

a plurality of radially extending support struts at the upper end of each shaft, each of said support struts expandable to a substantially perpendicular orientation relative to said support shafts and collapsible thereagainst;

a canopy overlaying said support struts, said canopy including a pair of side sections with a collapsible intermediate section therebetween allowing said canopy to be expanded to accommodate multiple users;

a telescoping arm interconnecting an upper end of one of said shafts with the upper end of another of said shafts whereby said shafts are movable away from each other to expand the intermediate section of said canopy, or toward each other to a juxtaposed contiguous position, collapsing said arm and said intermediate section of said canopy for convenient use by a single user.

5. (New) The umbrella according to Claim 4 wherein said arm includes a spring- biased locking pin for locking said arm in an extended position.

6. (New) The umbrella according to claim 5 wherein said intermediate section overlays a plurality of support ribs to enhance the structural integrity of said intermediate section when said intermediate section is expanded.

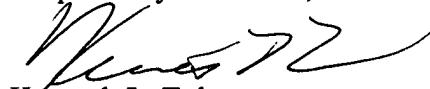
Remarks:

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested. Applicant has noted the examiner's objection to the drawings as not containing the spring-biased pin; however, the element is identified in Figure 3, reference numeral 4.

In the first Office Action, claims 1-3 were rejected in light of patents to Ma and Bethoon et al. The limitations of former claim 2 have been combined with those of former claim 1 to form new claim 4. In rejecting claim 2, the examiner noted that Bethoon discloses a "telescoping arm (18) interconnecting the upper portions of the two shafts for stabilizing the umbrella structure...." Bethoon relates to a portable shelter and in no way remotely relates to an expandible umbrella. As such, element 18 defines a central support rod with stretch bows secured thereto for supporting a canopy. The patent in no way suggests interconnecting the upper ends of two shafts with a telescoping arm to structurally enhance the expanded canopy and to facilitate expansion and contraction thereof. Please also note that new claim 4 contains the additional limitation that the arm interconnects "an upper end of one of said shafts with the upper end of another of said shafts," which is clearly not disclosed in any of the references cited herein.

Furthermore, neither patent individually nor in combination discloses or suggests support ribs beneath an expandable portion of a canopy to further enhance the canopy as is now claimed. For the foregoing reasons, applicant respectfully avers that the newly presented claims are allowable in light of the references of record herein.

Respectfully submitted,



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